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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Federal Communications Commission  
James Quello, Chairman  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Quello,

I believe that the new Cable Act of 1992 is extremely unfair to the consumers for whom it was supposedly written.

The rule of must carry is not in the best interest of the viewers, who now will have little say in what their cable systems carry, due to channel space availability. Cable operators will be forced to put on stations that they know will not be of interest to their viewers because of the must carry rule. These stations will take up channel space that would have been used to carry stations requested by their subscribers. I have heard that it is even possible that some cable channels will have to be removed to make room for these broadcast channels. No one has given me a choice of which channels I would like to see, and the way I understand it, my cable company may have to remove channels that I watch, to make room for channels that I have no interest in. I have called my cable service to request new channels like the Sci-Fi Channel, Court TV, Comedy Central, and Encore, and it seemed possible that they were going to be available in my area in the near future. Must carry has now prevented these new channels from becoming available, because of lack of channel space on the cable system.

I am outraged by the rule of retransmission consent, which is clearly not in the interest of the consumers. It was obviously placed into the Act by special interest groups, since the only ones it serves are the networks. I very much resent having to pay for watching stations that I can get for free over the air, and although I would not have to do so this year, according to the Act, I will have to in the future. I hope that my cable system, Suburban Cablevision, will be strong and do as they have said, not giving in to the networks, and removing them from the channel line-up. I would rather have the inconvenience of using a switch to change from cable to rabbit ears when I want to watch one of the networks, than know that I was paying for something that I already pay for through my patronage of the advertisers that support the networks. It is simply convenient

that I can receive the networks through my cable television subscription, but certainly not necessary; my reception on rabbit ears, while not as good as the cable reception, is just fine. I cannot justify paying for the same service twice, and Congress should not force cable subscribers to do so by allowing this rule to stand.

Consider, also, that when the networks are getting paid from two sources, their incentive to produce quality programming may be reduced. It won't matter so much that a sponsor does not approve of the quality of a program, when the broadcaster is getting a fixed income from the cable systems, regardless of the quality of the programming that they deliver. I, and others, write to sponsors to voice my opinions on programming, and I believe that my opinion occasionally has had a positive effect on commercial network programming. Subsidizing payments from cable bills cannot possibly command similar public input. The airwaves are public property, and should remain in the control of the public, and not subsidized through cable television subscriber payments.

As a resident of New Jersey, which has no significant broadcast networks, I also resent having to pay stations in New York, who do not directly serve our interest. Their focus is New York oriented, with only the occasional placating and humoring New Jersey reference or news story. I cannot remember the last positive New Jersey oriented news story I have seen on a New York commercial television station, yet every syringe that washed up on a New Jersey beach (from New York ?) in 1992 was accounted for in exuberant detail, including investigative teams and extreme close-ups. Must I be forced, through my monthly subscription to cable television service, to finance such anti-New Jersey sensationalized programming ? It seems so; New Jersey cable consumers will reap no benefits through the retransmission consent rule, and will have any positive impact through input to sponsors proportionally reduced.

Clearly, the Cable Act of 1992 was originally conceived to benefit all cable subscribers. Since its conception, it has been altered to the point where it hurts the very consumer that it was designed to help. The networks and obscure little television stations are the only ones who are benefiting from this Act, which is undeniably not in the best interest of the cable subscribers, or indeed, the general public.

I, and other cable subscribers would greatly appreciate anything you can do to help remedy this situation.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Nancy C. Luscombe

*Nancy C. Luscombe*

Copies sent to:

Senator Bill Bradley  
Senator Frank Lautenberg  
Representative Bob Franks